

**MHSOAC**  
Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission  
Commission Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 29, 2008

Radisson Hotel  
500 Leisure Lane  
Sacramento, CA 95815

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Gayle called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners in attendance: Linford Gayle, Chair; Andrew Poat, Vice Chair, David Pating, Bill Kolender, Patrick Henning, Tom Greene, Darlene Prettyman, Larry Poaster. (Commissioner Eduardo Vega arrived an hour late due to travel delays.)

Not in attendance: Saul Feldman, Mark Ridley-Thomas, Mary Hayashi, Larry Trujillo, Beth Gould, Wesley Chesbro.

Eight members were present and a quorum was established.

**III. Welcome from El Dorado County Mental Health Director**

John Bachman, the Mental Health Director, El Dorado County, welcomed the Commission Members. He discussed some of the challenges facing El Dorado County, among them:

The County faces many challenges and obstacles in meeting their communities' mental health needs -- there is a large rural and mountainous terrain, significant travel difficulties during the winter, an inadequate public transportation system, a significantly underserved Latino community, a significant shortage of mental health professionals in the county, and great difficulty in recruiting and maintaining mental health professionals.

A recent survey showed that about 30 percent of the Latino community is uninsured; data that is consistent with other information that shows that close to 40 percent on the Western Slope have no health insurance whatsoever.

The lack of properly trained mental health professionals in El Dorado County creates a significant challenge. During the past three years the recurring staff vacancy rate is close to 20 percent. Currently there are three psychiatrists for the entire County. The County recently received a designation as a Mental Health Professional Shortage Area, which he hopes will help them.

The Mental Health Services Act has mitigated some problems. There are five community support and service programs in operation; two programs engage in outreach to the Latino community.

There is a wraparound program for youth in the county. Mr. Bachman read a letter from a young community member named Joaquin, who thanked the community for their wraparound program.

MHSA monies were used to leverage an application to MIOCR, who granted the county \$750,000 to expand their behavior health course.

Prospect Place, a program for severely mentally ill clients, has been up and running since April '06.

The County posted their workforce education and training application on the County website.

Vice Chair Poat asked about the nature of the recruitment challenge for the county. Mr. Bachman stated that the challenge exists at multiple levels. One major issue is that salaries are lower than surrounding counties and thus not competitive. The people who apply are those who truly want to live in a rural setting. They are in a joint program with Sacramento State to offer a joint MSW Degree and there is an active consumer education program. Mr. Bachman is hopeful that the Mental Health Professional Shortage Designation, which has a potent loan repayment aspect, will also draw recruits.

Mr. Bachman stated two key elements that would be helpful in meeting the needs of those in rural settings -- one would involve a thoughtful attempt at reducing the administrative burdens inherent in seeking money; i.e. the seemingly unending number of reports required is a significant burden. Secondly, perhaps some of the innovation monies might be invested in rural collaborations. For example, four other counties, along with El Dorado, entered into their agreement with Sacramento State, an agreement that would not have been possible with El Dorado acting alone.

Chair Gayle asked about the Promotora program. Are there difficulties in hiring? Are any Promotora members consumers of mental health services? Mr. Bachman stated this is an ongoing concern and at the moment there are no Promotoras who are also consumers of their services nor are there family members of mental health service consumers who are Promotoras (at least none that have officially identified themselves as such).

Commissioner Prettyman mentioned that NAMI members may be instrumental in presenting information to the Hispanic community. Mr. Bachman concurred, and stated that some of the NAMI members serve as volunteer teachers.

Commissioner Henning asked, in reference to the continuing shortage of employees, what is the breakdown of services provided by county employees and what percent is contracted out? Mr. Bachman stated that all adult services are provided by mental health department staff and 2/3 of children's services are contracted out.

Chair Gayle thanked Mr. Bachman for his presentation and the hard work that is ongoing in El Dorado County.

Dr. Steve Mayberg, State of California Mental Health Director, swore in Sheri Whitt as the official MHSOAC Executive Director. She was welcomed with sustained applause from the Members and audience, and pictures were taken. Newly appointed Executive Director Whitt stated how pleased and honored she felt to officially take the position. Chair Gayle said he was pleased at the selection of Executive Director Whitt.

#### **IV. Minutes Approval of April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Commissioner Henning discussed changes to the April 24<sup>th</sup> Minutes, page 17, the last paragraph, which references three options; four options were actually mentioned. The additional option stated that the Commission still had hopes that they would be able to run statewide programs similar to the way they were intended (or words to that effect). Ms. Whitt noted that the language is on the computer and they will go back and ensure that the options are accurately stated.

Commissioner Gould noted that page five states "Commissioner Gould made a comment" and then it says "*he* asks" when it should have said "*she* asks."

Commissioner Poaster noted that, on page four of the April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, under "Department of Mental Health Report," it indicates that he said that "of the 3.1 billion somewhat less than a *million* has been spent on services." It should read "of the \$3.1 billion less than a *billion* has been spent . . . ."

Vice Chair Poat noted that page 7 of the April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, final paragraph, is not as he recollects. After discussion it was decided that the comment would be stricken.

**Motion:** Commissioner Poaster moved to approve the minutes for April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 with the changes referenced above; seconded by Commissioner Henning. The motion was unanimously approved with the changes referenced.

Ms. Whitt volunteered to track issues that are mentioned by members for future discussion (issues to be placed "in the parking lot", meaning for further action).

#### **V. Innovations Committee Update**

Commissioner Pating updated the Commission. Two meetings ago a motion was put forth to ask the Commission to give approval to the Innovations Committee to reconvene and address the specific question of *Should there be focus areas for the innovation plans when they roll out to the counties?* It was thought that limiting the scope of innovation possibilities to a few statewide priorities might help focus activities on developing the process, as well as adding to learning.

The Committee did approve reconvening the Innovations Committee. The Committee discussed the issue and concluded unanimously that focus areas are not needed. It was felt that the needed structure was explicitly stated and there was no need to limit the range of issues that might be discussed; that doing so would needlessly inhibit the creativity of the members. Thus, the recommendation is not to take up the recommendation of developing focus areas.

Commissioner Pating reiterated that the document continually references applying new strategies and ideas, as opposed to borrowing existing ideas.

Commissioner Prettyman referenced page three, which discusses scope of innovation. Under number four it says “*substantial change of an existing mental health practice, including significant adaptations for a new setting or community*” -- is that supplementation? Can you take a program that is working well now and make changes to that program and get innovation funds? Commissioner Pating responded that there are many possibilities and when restrictions are encountered the solutions may be “reframed” so that different solutions become possible.

Commissioner Pating noted another element from the Committee meeting. The Committee has asked to continue to meet with the Department to provide input to improve Department understanding of the innovation resource. He noted that the Commission will need to continue to work with the Department to allow the iterative process presented by the Committee to ensure that, as issues are discussed, they are translated to the overall guidelines process.

Ms. Carol Hood, Assistant Deputy Director, California Department of Mental Health, noted that the Department is committed to a collaborative effort. They can bring a work plan to the Commission in June, with target dates. They are looking at innovation as a single component, where it's not necessary to split out how much funding is for prevention and early intervention and how much is for CSS. Although the funding comes from those, they would put it into a separate component and then the Commission would not have to meet the guidelines of either CSS or PEI, but would have to meet the statutory requirements. Then the Department would put those into the guidelines. Guidelines for innovation would need to be met; for example, providing 50 percent for prevention for children and youth.

Commissioner Poaster asked if that meant that services could be done outside the realm of CSS or PEI. Ms. Hood stated that the statute would have to be followed. At a staff

level they identify policy and practice issues and how far to go in that particular area. Having the resource group available to them to provide input on that would be wonderful. Thus, she's not sure how to answer the question -- there would be a limit consistent with the statute.

Commissioner Prettyman asked if the funds could be used for a rehab program for those in board-and-care or in room-and-board, so that they could learn independent living skills. If a new kind of program could be developed to do that, is that something that could be done with those funds? Ms. Hood stated that she did not see any barrier to that, as long as it was consistent with the philosophy of the Act, which is based on wellness and resiliency and similar things.

Vice Chair Poat asked if the new program could be up and running in this calendar year? Ms. Hood stated that the major milestone for them is having the guidelines out. Another issue under consideration, which will come back to the Commission (probably in June) is whether or not planning funds should be made available so that the counties can start thinking about how they would best invest the funds.

Vice Chair Poat asked if the goal for this year would be to have some county planning and possibly some county plans submitted by the end of the calendar year. Ms. Hood stated that the previous direction was to not release the guidelines prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>. If released prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> then the three-year clock for reversion of the funds starts ticking in July of '08. If the funds are released on October 1<sup>st</sup> or later the clock doesn't start ticking until July of '09. Thus, her understanding was a release of October 1<sup>st</sup> or later.

Commissioner Pating noted that some of the pots of money are actually small and that areas of collaboration (as, for example, Mr. Bachman earlier mentioned had occurred in El Dorado County) and leveraging will be something worth looking at.

## **VI. MHSOAC Communication Plan**

Commissioner Henning updated the Commission. He commended the effort Commissioner Vega put into the planning effort (Mr. Vega had to miss his flight and was not present at first; he did subsequently arrive, during the Public Comment period).

They are trying to get the Communications Office up and running as fast as possible, and they are now seeing some of the fruits of that effort. He noted that KXJZ, the local affiliate of NPR carried a story about Chair Gayle and the Commission recently- and this was part of the effort. The Commission now has a method for reporting to the public the milestones they are achieving and hopefully the plan will provide the method for public recognition of the efforts.

Chairman Gayle commented on the need for a lot of innovation and he expressed his appreciation for the ideas presented thus far and noted that more ideas are needed. The

Communications Committee is working on methods of fostering relationships with the media.

Commissioner Henning noted that the proposal will also greatly enhance the Internet site, which currently is somewhat cumbersome and confusing and needs to be condensed.

Cynthia Craft observed that, on the tab section of the issues paper, it is noted that deeper work needs to be done on issue-briefing for the Commission, and milestones need to be developed and examples developed on how the monies have been spent thus far and the good works that have occurred as a result of that. A productive meeting with the DMH webmasters was held earlier in the week and development of the milestones is continuing.

Commissioner Prettyman asked if there was a possibility of getting a state calendar so the Commissioners can know of upcoming conferences in their area that they could attend to help get the word out. Chairman Henning thought this was a tremendous idea, to have a place, possibly on the website, that they can communicate the conference schedule in an appropriate way. Ms. Whitt will add this conference schedule idea to plans for future discussion.

Commissioner Poat thanked Commissioners Henning and Vega for their efforts. He then highlighted the issue of a "report card," an annual assessment that the Commission might issue to the public. When might a first assessment be promulgated? Ms. Whitt mentioned that they have discussed this idea and will bring forward their thinking during next month's meeting when budget and staffing is discussed.

Commissioner Poat noted that the five-year anniversary of voters' approval of their activities will be a significant opportunity to review their actions. The first report should be done within that five-year timeframe and an assessment of their strengths and acknowledgment of their opportunities for growth needs to be issued to the public.

Chairman Henning agreed, and echoed the importance of the Committee "grabbing hold" of their message and moving forward with the communication of those messages. Commissioner Poat noted that the five-year anniversary timeframe provides an opportunity to evaluate and document strengths and opportunities, as well as the strategies to address the shortcomings discovered thus far. Commissioner Henning concurred and cautioned that, because of lack of staff, communication has been slow in building and fostering the necessary relationships with the public and other government entities.

Commissioner Pating asked if the Executive Committee would take on the task of developing the self-assessments needed; perhaps each committee separately and then for the Commission overall. Commissioner Henning concurred and thought that this might require additional discussion later.

## Public Comment

- Ms. Delphine Brody, California Network of Mental Health Clients, stated that they applaud Commissioners Henning and Vega and Ms. Craft for their work on the plan. She suggested that strengthening communications with stakeholders is needed; that more support be given to client access to electronic communications, and for empowerment to clients and families with Internet access; that, along with Protection Advocacy, Inc., NAMI California, the Sacramento Native American Health Center and REMHDCO, they strongly support the recommendation that 30 days notice be given to stakeholders to review items before an action item on the OAC Agenda; that, as part of the requirements of the integrated planning process, counties should educate stakeholders on both the local and state agency processes and participation.

They look forward to working with the OAC staff on how that education effort would look on the ground; and they feel that that outreach should happen on the county level. It's difficult for stakeholder organizations to prepare their constituents for every aspect of state-level stakeholder processes when they are not familiar with them and the counties don't educate people about them.

Also, they feel that community-based organizations are ideally suited for doing local outreach for places like board-and-care and drop-in centers and in talking to mental health clients wherever they meet. They recommend that the newsletter be made more widely available through broad invitations to sign up, through multiple venues. They want to make sure that it does get out to clients and other stakeholders everywhere.

Finally, the communication plan should promote a strengths-based, positive, recovery-oriented, holistic vision that empowers the clients and that recognizes the strengths of the clients.

- Ms. Patty Gainer, Sacramento Clients Advocate and Consultant, Sacramento County, asked that the Commission think about adding to the communication plan proposal that a major part of the goal be to involve the public in outreach and engagement, and in particular clients. A big strategy for doing that is to prioritize hiring more clients to implement the goals and strategies in the communication plan.

Also, she would like the Commission to recognize the huge digital divide that exists. Clients could be hired to do the outreach and goals in person. In her experience a thousand flyers will not get people to attend meetings, but one-on-one explanations and conversations will, and clients are ideally suited for this. She also agrees with the other organizations that the Commission should involve the community partners in advance of submitting their proposals as part of the process and give at least a 30 day notice to the public so they can properly prepare in advance of the meetings.

(Chair Gayle acknowledged the arrival of Commissioner Vega.)

Ms. Leticia Alejandrez, Executive Director, California Family Resource Association, offered the opportunity for the Commission to work in partnership with her Association, which can provide compelling stories about people who otherwise would not be receiving services or who are receiving services in highly innovative ways. She invited the Commission to “go to the source” to inform people of their work. They can help the Commission to “connect the dots” and would like to assist in this effort.

- Mr. Michael Wilkins, a client and advocate in Sacramento, stated first that he felt the Commission should prioritize hiring more clients to implement the communications plan; and second, he recommends that the Commission involve the community partners and provide the 30 day notice mentioned earlier.
- Mr. Lou Williamson, CNMHC, discussed hiring consumers. He asked that the Commission not forget the people under care; people who are mental health clients. He discussed the People First Movement and people with schizophrenia (which he categorized as “the S word”). He was hired on as a staff person, went back to school and received a Masters Degree in Counseling, opened his own business and did worker’s comp cases for the states of California, Alaska and Nevada. He asked that the Commission not become so bureaucratic that it lets people slip through the cracks.

Commissioner Vega commented that an important part of their ongoing dialogue concerns three different parts of the communications work plan. These parts are: first, internal communications between Commission members; second, communications between the Commission and the public; and third, the communications with the media; i.e. how they represent themselves to the media.

As the Communication Plan moves forward, timelines will be developed. He is pleased to see some of the suggestions that will help identify where they will expand, how they will move forward in terms of communicating what the Commission does, and how they view that as part of their responsibility to the public and stakeholders of California.

From his point of view, the “big picture” issue is one they still need to grapple with, and it will be an important aspect of the Commission’s growth. This also relates to their individual strategic planning. This is the time to engage in that dialogue amongst themselves, and they can then take an illuminated vision forward to the public and really communicate and do their job for the people of California.

He noted that they are striving towards a unified communication plan, so that, if someone were to approach him and ask, in his role as a Commissioner, just what the Commission is doing, he would be able to respond very clearly *“this is the Commission’s role, and I know we are achieving that, and this is how -- one, two, three, etc.”*



Commissioner Pating stated that he liked the idea of three levels of communication. He asked if it were possible for each individual committee, as part of their work, to be tasked with identifying their communication strategies and needs as an explicit part of their work.

Vice Chair Poat agreed and stated that they will be meeting tomorrow to work on a distributive strategy that each committee will be responsible for. A written charter will be adopted (hopefully at the June meeting) that will include the communication responsibilities.

Commissioner Vega pointed out that one element that has become clear is that one person can not handle the entire function of communications for the Commission. Each committee thinking about its specific communication role is important. A dissemination plan will also be needed to “get the word out” about the innovative practices and programs that come forward through their funding sources.

Commissioner Pating noted the importance of letting people know what is available, what are the priorities, etc.

Ms. Whitt noted that these items will be addressed.

**Motion:** Commissioner Kolender moved to adopt the Communication Plan as presented; seconded by Commissioner Poat. The motion was unanimously adopted.

## **VII. Adoption of Review Tools - CSS Housing and Capital Facilities/IT**

Mr. Jose Oseguera, MHSOAC staff, commented on how the review tools were produced and how the various parties involved were taken into perspective. Ms. Whitt stated that a regular part of the process of vetting all of the tools is asking for input from the stakeholders, the public and the Commission.

Commissioner Prettyman commented that the appropriate terms used in Executive Order 06 should be “permanent quality affordable housing” (the word “quality” had been omitted). Ms. Whitt said they would review and make the appropriate changes, ensuring that the word “quality” be used throughout. Chair Gayle concurred.

Commissioner Poat expressed his appreciation about the first criteria, “treating the whole person.” He said he is confused about criteria two -- how would a housing project meet this criterion? Ms. Whitt clarified that counties must submit plans in partnership with proposed contractors; and counties must outline, as part of that submission, what proposed services they intend to offer. The Commission staff would then look at those services to ensure they are in line with what is on the list of criteria. Ms. Wanda Kato, MHSOAC staff, further clarified that the Commission’s tool provides a global review of the overall housing; the DMH tool is more specific in terms of clarifying the guidelines.

Commissioner Poat asked about the Commission's position on leveraging funds. Ms. Kato responded that the guidelines state that organizations are not precluded from using leveraging as a tool. Ms. Hood, CDMH, clarified that there are two parts to the application and one part is for housing development; there is an expectation of a three to one matching fund built in all of the structures. CHFA, whose core business is affordable housing, looks at the financials, and they decide, along with DMH and MHSOAC staff. Commissioner Poat asked about the funding for the social services that goes along with the housing. Ms. Hood stated that a unique feature of the program is that it ties together the development, the services, and the operating subsidies, the three legs of the stool, to make affordable housing for people with disabilities work.

Commissioner Poat asked if there is currently criteria that would evaluate whether there is adequate funding, CSS or otherwise, to provide the social services promised. Ms. Hood said yes, the county has to provide assurances that they will make sure that the appropriate target population gets in and that the county will meet the guidelines and ensure that the services are effective for that population.

Commissioner Poat expressed a concern he keeps hearing from his local stakeholders -- they would like to see plans that grow out of the local participation. He would rather see that as the second criteria.

Commissioner Vega expressed his support for ensuring that the housing funding is being leveraged. Historically, it can be difficult to get permission to build housing for disabled or mentally ill people in some communities. This sometimes leads to development of "disability ghettos" for Section 8 housing. Can the criteria be better specified to deal with the inherent ("Not in my BackYard") issues?

Ms. Whitt stated that one way to deal with that would be training for those who will be involved in the review. Clients will be involved with the review process and they will be talking, from a first hand perspective, about what quality housing means to them and what the stigma and discrimination experiences feel like. They really want their reviewers to be sensitized as they review the incoming plans.

Commissioner Henning suggested that it may be fruitful to have Sacramento County Housing officials come and discuss that. Ms. Whitt added that to a list for future consideration.

Commissioner Pating commented on a discussion that occurred previously at the Co-Occurring Disorders Hearing, where housing was the priority item discussed. He noted that the national model is in transition and some counties have the older framework. Sometimes comparisons may be made on an older versus newer perspective of the national model (an "apples compared to oranges" comparison) and this may lead to different community perspectives, depending on which framework model that community is operating in.

Commissioner Pating further stated that, with regard to the first criteria, the newer framework is moving in that direction but is not yet fully developed. Regarding the second criteria, he agreed this was a very important element. In buildings that are managed by property management firms, the air of respect and dignity sought by clients and consumers is sometimes lacking. The key issue is engagement and willingness of people to come in to these units. Thus, it is important that the Commission train itself in how best to reduce that stigma.

Commissioner Poat responded that, if that is the case, then it should be written into the criteria; he felt that it currently does not say that.

Regarding the leveraging, Commissioner Pating again referenced the Co-Occurring Disorders Hearing, and the comment from counties that the application is complicated -- a three-headed giant of housing, mental health and other services.

Ms. Kato described the technical assistance that will be available to counties to help them with these complications: much training is occurring for counties; conference calls and face-to-face meetings are being put on by CIMH. Technical assistance is being provided and will continue to be provided to the counties, from several different organizations.

Commissioner Pating asked if the technical assistance could include information on how to access different kinds of monies? Ms. Kato said yes.

Chair Gayle commented on the difficulties he faced when he worked in supportive housing and ran a few housing programs. The goal is that someone who moves into permanent housing has a right to enjoy peaceful living. There is no guarantee that the stigma around housing can be completely minimized. There is a need to run a safe building; sometimes mental health patients are unsafe tenants who must be dealt with. These are real issues that property management has to deal with and it is important to be careful not to place all the blame for the stigma on the property management people.

Commissioner Prettyman said training the property management personnel on how to work with people who have mental illnesses is very important. The personnel need to be trained on how to promote acceptance, dignity and social inclusion, and how to utilize support services when needed. She also asked if HUD 811 monies and MHSA monies can be used. Ms. Hood said she would have to research that and would get back to her with the information.

### **Public Comment**

- Ms. Hood, CDMH, suggested that the word “*must*” used in portions of the guidelines may need to be changed to the word “*should*” so that counties understand that the guideline is something to be encouraged and is not a new standard (which may be suggested by the use of the word “*must*”).

- Ms. Brody, CA Network of Mental Health Clients, expressed concern that “voluntary participation” involves choice and personal dignity, and sometimes these elements are missing in supportive housing. Frequently in the past single-room occupancy (SRO) buildings are used for the housing, with kitchen and bathroom facilities that must be shared by several occupants. In addition, SRO’s are often in disrepair, pest infested, susceptible to fire and earthquake destruction, and located in high crime areas, which put tenants at risk. Thus, scattered site housing should be available.

Also, SRO property management, citing safety concerns, often restrict or prohibit cooking, visitors or co-habitants. Visitor policies need to reflect the dignity that clients want and deserve. In addition, property management personnel will often evict someone simply for complaining about conditions. Thus, tenant advocacy needs to be in place.

- Ms. Carmen Diaz, UACF, stated that she likes the new housing initiative, which is for adults, but there still is nothing available for severely emotionally disabled (SED) children and their families. Research has shown that many homeless families have SED children and she is concerned that no mention for housing for SED children is available.

Commissioner Pating asked about the scope of the problem. Homeless counts are very inaccurate and there is no standardized state method for measurement. He asked Ms. Diaz if such a tool exists. Ms. Diaz stated that she is not sure what research tool is being used and this continues to be a problem. Commissioner Pating noted that, until the problem can be quantified, it will be extremely difficult to make appropriate decisions regarding the problem.

- Ms. Vicki Mendoza, Aspiranet, commented on how difficult it is for families. She echoed Ms. Diaz’s comments. Ms. Mendoza works with this population and knows that it is very difficult for parents of SED children to find and keep a job. She asked that the Commission work to help support the children within the system.
- Ms. Stephanie Welch, California Mental Health Director’s Association, said that her Association has been able to find some housing and thought it may be an appropriate time to provide a presentation to the Commission on how they achieved this. Ms. Whitt stated that the Commission will be contacting her.
- Ms. Gwen Slattery, UACF, reiterated the importance of providing housing for children with mental health issues. She noted a study previously done in Long Beach to determine why students were so angry and discovered that 1/3 of the students came from separated families. She further noted that the average family needs to go to school to attend to their child once a year or less; the average

family with an SED child may need to go several times a week. Consider how much work is lost as a result and why it is so difficult for parents of special needs children to maintain their jobs. The residual effects of SED children on their families are tremendous. Housing is extremely important because these other factors increase tension within the family structure and the worry over housing is magnified. Thus, the need for housing must be dealt with very seriously.

- Ms. Socorro Ramos remarked that she works with many homeless families and is uncertain about how children, as minors, can apply for and qualify to be provided these services. Commissioner Henning responded that it is clearly defined in the Department's guidelines, on page five, that children qualify for the services.
- Ms. Dede Ranahan, California NAMI, stated that in Santa Clara they are making great strides with their housing program, but because of cuts in their services they are now facing the possibility of making more people homeless. She hopes that housing can be seamlessly brought into the mental health system. Secondly, she does not see, in the review tool, what the oversight selection criteria are for who gets in to the housing. Third, she senses that the tool is not yet ready to be voted on and she hopes it will be worked on further.

Commissioner Pating remarked that it is clear to him from the public comment that there are areas of need. Ms. Whitt noted that it would have been helpful to have both tools available at once but this is not feasible for today. She is hopeful that the Commission will feel comfortable voting on the CSS Housing portion of the Review Tool today and perhaps have another vote in June. Chair Gayle stated how important it is that the Commission has sufficient time to discuss the issues.

Commissioner Poaster asked how a delay might affect existing applications. Ms. Hood responded that there are certain timeframes, and if the Commission wishes to provide input and guidance during that timeframe, DMH is happy to receive it, as part of the approval process. They currently have one application for capital and technology and one for housing. Ms. Kato noted that there are currently four applications for housing and two more were received yesterday from Santa Clara County. Thus far, Sacramento is the only county that has been approved.

Commissioner Poaster noted how important it is that the Commission understand that their responsibilities are review and comment, not review and approval, and the Review Tool documents provide them an opportunity to give input.

Ms. Whitt further stated that Commission staff can take direction from the Commissioners on how best to provide provisional comments and staff could then bring back the Review Tool at the next meeting.

Commissioner Poaster asked about criteria three on "interoperability." Mr. Oseguera responded that interoperability refers to the various computer systems that are currently

on board and making those systems able to talk with one another; in essence, it is “*systems interoperability*” that is the goal.

Commissioner Vega stated that pushing IT and Capital Facilities together and attempting to create general language around it is difficult, as they are two distinct parts. Mr. Oseguera responded that the item can certainly be augmented to clarify that they are distinct parts. Ms. Whitt stated that staff will add this clarification.

**Motion:** Commissioner Poaster moved to adopt the CSS Housing Review Tool as presented; seconded by Commissioner Henning. The motion was unanimously adopted.

### **VIII. Statewide Projects, adoption of Proposed Action Plan**

**Discussion of proposed action plan to address: 1. Adopt approach to statewide projects as earlier discussed; 2. Adopt recommended one-day meeting to identify high impact projects the MHSOAC can implement by the end of the calendar year; 3. Adopt response to State budget.**

Ms. Whitt narrated a PowerPoint presentation that provided background on the proposed action plan. Some highlights:

- The original plan was for monies to be set aside for the projects and have the Department of Mental Health (DMH) administer them. However, MHSA dollars flow to the counties first; thus the counties needed to reassign money back to the state in order for the statewide projects to be funded. DMH did not have the authority to receive this money from the counties, nor to expend it in support of statewide projects. Also, counties were not certain they wanted to reassign the money back and thought they might be better able to administer the funds for the projects.
- Several months later, it now appears likely that DMH will in fact have the authority to receive and expend funds for three projects: suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination reduction; and in the near future for the Student Mental Health Initiative (pending passage of the state budget).

Ms. Whitt provided the following recommendations:

- The Department of Mental Health (DHM) administer statewide projects. Counties be asked to assign funding for statewide projects back to the state and DMH would administer the statewide projects for suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination reduction, and the Student Mental Health Initiative. This is consistent with OAC’s original plan. Projects retain their original identity and form and can be easily monitored and evaluated.

Implementation planning and initial steps can begin immediately. Counties can begin the reassignment process.

- Once the state budget is approved the state can begin to accept and expend dollars as needed to support implementation. Counties could still develop and fund activities and projects meant to compliment the statewide projects. Possible ways to do this:
  1. DMH could write guidelines so counties can use existing PEI funding to fund the activities.
  2. DMH is also looking at the most up-to-date revenue projections and receipts for the purpose of identifying possible additional funds that could be made available. Proposals for additional funding would come back to OAC for approval.
  3. An additional option is that counties could retain all funding for statewide projects and administer the projects via a Joint Powers Authority. However, the administrative structure is not currently in place to do this in a timely fashion.

Staff recommends that the statewide projects be administered by DMH and evaluated in two years for effectiveness and consideration of adjustments.

Ms. Whitt concluded with the staff's recommendation that the three programs -- suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination reduction and Student Mental Health Initiative be voted into action today. Two other statewide projects, one for training and technical assistance/capacity building and the other for programs specifically targeted towards ethnic and cultural communities, have previously begun work. This work is being done through use of administrative funds through DMH and need not be dealt with today.

Ms. Hood commented that the \$6 million technical training and assistance portion of the statewide project is not moving forward, as the Governor's Office did not provide authority to do so and there is no authority for DMH to administer the monies in '08-'09.

Commissioner Vega commented that it seems clear that some kind of program may occur at the local level. How are currently identified funds moved to the local area to make a difference there? Ms. Whitt said the fund allocation is being done collaboratively at the county and state level.

Commissioner Poaster emphasized the importance of a coordinated state/local effort. It seems clear that if both components are not included the project will not be successful. Yet there seems no inclination about how to ensure that will happen.

Ms. Whitt stated that there is certainly room for the Commission to strengthen existing wording in their comments about the statewide projects to reflect the essential and specific need for state and local efforts to coordinate.

Ms. Hood stated that, specifically for stigma and discrimination, the Department is willing to facilitate a strategic plan involving those who were previously involved in that work, and then complimenting that with experts and other people whose perspective should be included. This work would culminate in a strategic plan. One thing they could do is to model the process as they did with the suicide prevention plan, to ensure that state and local priorities and activities can be unified and a “grand plan” developed. Current funding for stigma and discrimination has been identified at \$15 million for the statewide project. In addition, the Department is also looking for additional funds that could, with the Commission’s agreement, be allocated to the counties.

Commissioner Poaster reiterated that the state and local projects must be looked at as a single element to move forward successfully.

Ms. Welch noted that there is agreement for a coordinated, collaborative effort and she echoed the need for a meaningful effort to move forward in a collaborative way. She expressed approval of the staff’s recommendation that the Commission vote for DMH to be responsible for administering the three programs: suicide prevention, stigma discrimination and the Student Mental Health Initiative.

Commissioner Pating cited four major stations that the Commission can influence the outcome of: 1. Resource guidelines; 2. State guidelines; 3. Technical assistance that helps to teach the counties what the guidelines mean; and 4. The final plan review. If the technical assistance step is not fully funded then many items will get lost. Ms. Whitt assured that the item will receive future consideration.

Commissioner Vega asked if the state administers the project would there be any assurances from the state that some of the resources from the state will support locally driven programs. Ms. Hood said she could not provide those assurances at this time. What they are trying to do is conduct a strategic plan that determines the most effective use of these monies. Ms. Whitt reiterated that the commitment is there, they have begun the process of identifying other funds, and the state level people have stated their support for coordination with the local level.

### **Public Comment**

- Ms. Fran Edelstein, Consultant, California Alliance of Child and Family Services, said she hoped that the stigma and discrimination project would be a statewide project with closely associated effort for maximum outcome. Her organization does not feel it is possible to meet the promise of the Mental Health Services Act without addressing stigma and discrimination. She hopes they will make a commitment to these ideas today. She asked the Commission to remember that



children and their families need to be an important part of any efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination. It is very important that the projects address the parents of the children as they also experience tremendous stigma and discrimination and it makes it very difficult for them to ask for or receive help when it is offered to them. It also gets in the way of parents becoming powerful advocates for their children. She encouraged the Commission to move forward with all due speed to support the combined state and local effort.

- Ms. Scott Berenson, Disabled Students Program and Services Coordinator, California Community College's Chancellor's Office, expressed his excitement about the Student Mental Health Initiative. Mental health services have been very effective in allowing people with mental illness to come to college. He supports the recommendation that Senator Steinberg made, with a couple of caveats. Educational institutions are not organized on county boundaries, so it is very important that the program be administered from a statewide perspective. Some colleges cross county boundaries and they are hoping that the request for qualifications that are referred to will not limit the program and grants to county borders. He noted that CMHDA's proposal requests that small counties be allowed to opt out, or be excluded, and he is hopeful that students in those small counties can still apply for remaining funds. Also, that the original \$6 million limit will remain the amount of money available.
- Ms. Sandra Duval, United Advocates for Children and Families, commented that stigma and discrimination are true barriers to children receiving the proper services and therefore they applaud what they have heard today, going forward with the statewide projects and DMH administering them. They feel that will be the best way to get the projects started. She emphasized how important it is for children to receive mental health services early to prevent them from being separated from their families, dropping out of school, and having other undesirable outcomes.
- Ms. Maria Blandizzi, UC Office of the Chairs of Student Mental Health Oversight Committee, said members of their Oversight Committee attended several meetings last summer, collaborating with representatives of CSU and California Community Colleges to contribute to the development of the Student Mental Health Initiative. They would like to keep this issue on the "front burner" of the Committee's agenda.

Since the issuance of the UC Student Mental Health Report the University of California has been dedicating more resources to student mental health needs but they still have a substantial gap of \$41 million to augment services. Last year \$4 million was allocated and \$8 million for the coming year. They have formed a workgroup poised to strategize and coordinate system-wide and campus-based grant proposals once the RFP is issued, if it is issued. They are excited about the promise of the funding and look forward to continuing their collaborative efforts.

- Mr. Victor Ojakian expressed his support for Senator Steinberg's proposal, as it ends a bottleneck. There is large representation from each of the three college systems in California attending the meeting; all of them have been working on student mental health over the last couple of years and are ready to go. All they need are some funds. If that happens, good things will happen, so hopefully the Committee will vote on the issue quickly.

He stated the mental health needs in the state have not stopped. In 1992 the CDMH estimated that, for age group 0-17, there were between 450,000 and 650,000 needing care. The population of young people since then has risen substantially; thus the magnitude of the need has increased. Suicide is increasing among young people. The longer we wait, the worse the problem gets.

- Mr. Eric Zuniga, Wellness and Recovery Center, suggested the following question as a point of departure for continuing dialogue: How does a person become an expert? He suggested a dialogue from individuals who have experienced mental health difficulties. He said they are experts and should be a part of the continuing dialogue.
- Ms. Mandy Lee, Assembly Member Hayashi's Office, read a brief statement from the Assembly Member:

*"It was my hope to be with you today to discuss the matter of funding for these important prevention and early intervention statewide projects, but legislative deadlines have my colleagues and I in the Assembly working to move bills to the first house by the end of the week. Even so, I would like to take this opportunity to show my support for Senator Steinberg's strategy to expedite funding and implementation of these critical projects. As outlined in his May 8<sup>th</sup> letter, the strategy calls for the implementation of the Student Mental Health Initiative, the statewide initiative on suicide prevention, and the statewide initiative on stigma and discrimination reduction through state administration. Under this approach the Department of Mental Health will provide funding to each of these programs. The funding will then be reassigned back to the state for each project. As you know, this is already being done with MHSA housing programs, so this process has proven to be effective. I stand behind the leadership of Senator Steinberg and his adjusted strategy to expedite funding for these important projects. I commend this body for all the work put into the development of these projects, and it is my hope that the OAC move forward to adopt this recommendation today. With their focus on early intervention and prevention the results of these groundbreaking initiatives can only be realized with speedy and timely implementation. Thank you."*

- Dr. D.M Jennette, UC Davis Counseling Center, expressed support for the initiative. The second leading cause of death among students in higher education

is suicide, and UC Davis is poised to implement programs that would reduce and prevent the rates of suicides. They could use the leveraging effect of peer-to-peer programs, for example, to implement action that would raise awareness and prevent suicide. They are also poised to use scalable methods, like technology, that could be implemented across statewide programs. Essentially, they just need the funding to be able to move forward, and applaud efforts to expedite movement on the programs.

- Mr. Bert Epstein, Organization of College Counseling Center Directors in Higher Education, stated that they wholeheartedly endorse the proposal to have the DMH be the funding mechanism for the initiative. Students are hurting; the longer the delay, the longer they cannot help them. He also encouraged the Commission to think about the next steps, in terms of the actual procedures that will be needed to get the funding mechanisms going.
- Ms. Melanie Hale, President, California Community College Mental Health and Wellness Association, spoke on behalf of the “silent voices”, those who committed suicide and would surely be in support of the Student Mental Health Initiative. They are grateful for the time everyone has spent, regardless of divergent views and opinions. She implored the Commission to support the proposal and remove any artificial barriers that may delay the process and delay the job they are there to do.
- Ms. Becky Perelli, California Community College Health Services Association, noted that they desperately need the funds and are very concerned about the time lag. Most of the health services collaborate and have arrangements with counties; they depend on the county mental health services because their students do not have insurance coverage. Health Services did a health assessment survey last spring of approximately 72,000 community college students and 10.8% stated in self-reports that they seriously considered attempting suicide 1-10 times. In addition, seven of eight self-reported factors that impacted academic performance are mental health issues. They are ready and waiting for the funding to come forward.
- Ms. Delphine Brody noted that the California Network of Mental Health Clients strongly supports Senator Steinberg’s proposal and welcomes the implementation of the three projects. They urge stakeholders to continue to take part on the state and local level on all three projects.
- Ms. Stacie Hiramoto, REMHDCO, expressed the organization’s strong support and urged the Committee to support the proposal.
- Ms. Molly Brassil, California Primary Care Association, echoed support for the three projects.

- Ms. Dede Ranahan noted NAMI's support for the projects and asked if there are any problems with the reassignment of funding process? Are there any challenges that can be mitigated in advance that may arise? Ms. Whitt stated that the information packet referenced the reassignment process and suggested she contact the point person listed in the packet.
- Ms. Patty Gainer stated that she personally saw stigma as prejudice. What is in someone's mind is not her business and she is much more concerned about prejudice. She understands the need to have anti-stigma campaigns but discrimination and proactive solutions about people's behaviors needs to be a bigger focus. She appreciated the work done on the state campaigns and urged the Commission to approve them today.

She expressed some concerns: 1. The big ad campaigns do not work well and are enormously expensive. 2. She recommends prioritizing the hiring of clients to implement the statewide programs. 3. She noted that the anti-stigma panels and speaker's bureaus are very cost-effective ways to reduce stigma, as well as being a good way to hire clients. 4. She recommended that statewide programs include an awareness of and focus on trauma.

- Ms. Sandra Marley, client advocate, stated that her experience comes from the Parliament in British Columbia, Canada. She suggested that there may be a need for divisions (north, south, east, and west for example) or some other method that breaks up the huge California project into smaller parts. She complimented the staff for their outstanding governmental relations.
- Ms. Khatera Aslani hoped that the OAC will recommend and encourage the state and counties to partner with consumer and family-operated organizations in the efforts of reducing and eliminating stigma and discrimination.
- Ms. Stephanie Welch commented on the assignment sheet faxed to everyone earlier. She asked that the benefits to local communities be clearly articulated on the sheet.

Vice Chair Poat said the Commission is now adding their support and asking the Legislature and Governor to authorize DMH to be the coordinating authority for the implementation of the projects. DMH, once that authority is secured, would start the development of a stigma and discrimination plan. In addition, they would be staffing up to administer the suicide prevention and Student Mental Health Initiative programs. The Commission will ask for a monthly update on each of the three objectives.

**Motion:** Vice Chair Poat moved to adopt the proposal with updated wording; seconded by Commissioner Pating. The motion was unanimously approved.

(The Commission tabled the second and third portions of the item to a future meeting.)

**IX. Measurement and Outcomes Technical Resource Group (TRG)**

Commissioner Poaster gave a PowerPoint presentation on a policy concept paper “broad in concept and short in detail,” as the particular policy direction has not yet been decided. The paper advances the idea that it is the responsibility of OAC to have a lead role in helping promote, coordinate and develop the overarching evaluation to be presented “down the road” to the public, the legislature and the various other constituencies regarding the impact of the Mental Health Services Act. He suggested OAC provide the overarching report in such a way that the report in no way negates the data that has been collected thus far; rather, it would pull together the data collection in a useful way.

The overarching evaluation should be pulled together by an individual or entity not directly involved. OAC assumes a role in coordinating the project and selecting an individual or entity to undergo a comprehensive process to develop the criteria and outcome measures that seem to be related to what a final report to the public should look like. It is also important to ensure that whatever is done is done with an eye toward looking at all of the data collected. The report would provide a “macro-level,” the broader indicators that will be used as the basis of the evaluation reports.

TRG recommends that OAC move to identify funding for the concept paper creation. The “end game” is identifying a funding mechanism and a contractor who will work for the entire variety of stakeholders in California to create the report.

Vice Chair Poat echoed the need for an independent evaluation and stated it was time to move to the next stage of fleshing out how to proceed.

Commissioner Poaster stated that the next step is to identify funding for the evaluation report. Ms. Whitt noted that there may be a transitional step where needed information could be tapped from existing data. Once they have a better idea of what is truly missing they could then move toward hiring an independent contractor.

Commissioner Poaster said he views the evaluation report as pulling together, integrating, synthesizing the available information.

Commissioner Pating expressed support for the proposal and asked if, as an intermediate goal, some data could be put together prior to the five year report, perhaps the CSS Housing information. Also, they are finding that multiple levels of outcomes (both global and local) are needed and asked whether the evaluation report would be the appropriate place to express these outcomes.

Ms. Whitt noted that so much of what OAC wants to do is consistent with the intentions of the Department and commented on the importance of synthesizing the information. She also clarified that the four major players referenced in the action plan are Department

of Mental Health, the OAC, the Mental Health Planning Council and the California Mental Health Directors. These are the four entities responsible for implementation of the Act (by statute).

### **Public Comment**

- Ms. Hiramoto asked if the Commission would consider putting in language that “ensures that all relevant data reports include utilization and performance outcomes by race, ethnicity, gender and age”. Without collecting this data it will be difficult to determine how to reduce disparities.
- Ms. Harriet Markell, California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies, discussed the portion of the document that emphasizes the comprehensive nature of what is going to be evaluated and how it will be brought together. Since the Mental Health Act discusses moving forward with developing a fully integrated statewide mental health system, then it is important that the Commission move toward the direction of a fully integrated evaluation system that covers everything from individual client outcomes all the way to state level process measures and overall health of the system and changes over time. She also emphasized the importance of non-duplicated effort. She supports bringing in an outside entity that has no investment in any one piece of the system.
- Ms. Diaz said although she likes the proposal, she thinks it may be too broad. In her experience she was asked for evaluations from her provider, which can be very intimidating, as the provider probably will be watching as the evaluation is being filled out. She wants to ensure that people filling out evaluations are not placed in a position where they have to lie or feel uncomfortable about filling them out. Another way might be through the client group, the parent group or perhaps NAMI, to have them participate and do some of the satisfaction reports.
- Ms. Welch reported the endorsement of the Mental Health Director’s Association. They think it is going in the right direction because of the independent evaluation, an evaluation that looks at the entire mental health system. It is difficult to understand how best to utilize the MHSA until there is an understanding of how it impacts the rest of the system that is not MHSA-funded. They appreciate that the report will look at already existing data. They look forward to working with the involved parties to move the effort forward.

**Motion:** Commissioner Greene moved to adopt the evaluation report; seconded by Commissioner Prettyman. The motion was unanimously adopted.

### **X. Review Agenda for Next Meeting**

Ms. Whitt mentioned Commissioner comments from earlier in the meeting regarding the proposed June agenda: Sacramento Housing to provide a presentation; bring back the

Housing Review Tool along with a presentation, and other items. She feels there may be a fair amount of adjustment needed on the June agenda.

Ms. Beverly Whitcomb, OAC Staff, noted a number of items listed for future consideration -- an additional report on specifics of innovation; the recommendation that each committee prepare their version of a communication plan; an educational presentation on housing and community acceptance, combating NIMBY and other housing issues; and others.

Commissioner Poaster reiterated that the issue of technical training needs to be discussed.

Ms. Whitt suggested that the to-do agenda issues be combined and prioritized during the following day's management meeting. Chair Gayle concurred.

#### **X1. Commissioner Question and Answer Period on Various Reports**

##### **DMH Report**

Ms. Hood mentioned that a new format for the newsletter Progress is included in the Report. Commissioner Greene asked if there has been any movement in the Legislature to take advantage of the large bank account MHS has accrued. Ms. Hood said that there was no proposal by the administration. There are questions from others, for example from the Legislative Analysts, about accessing the funds because of the state's budget severity. There will be a written response sent to the Legislative Analysts which is still under review at this time.

Vice Chair Poat mentioned that they have been in discussion with a variety of individuals regarding the best course for the Commission to take on guarding their funds. When a recommended consensus is gained it will be communicated to the full Commission.

Commissioner Kolender asked to make a few points about the relative effectiveness of the communication plan cited earlier. He then asked Mr. Selix to comment further.

Mr. Rusty Selix, MHAC, noted that Sheriff (also Commissioner) Kolender is referring to the issue of speaking to the broader range of stakeholders and the interrelationships needed. What are we doing to communicate with police and sheriff's departments? What are we doing regarding mental health in the workplace and the schools? When we envisioned stakeholder involvement on the Commission it was envisioned that relationships would be created with members of those organizations that reflect the stakeholder groups. It is a task for staff to work on; to develop a way of providing an interface, a two-way communication, with those organizations/stakeholders.

Commissioner Kolender followed up, remarking that many people in the mental health population come to jail and they don't know how to help them while they are there.

Currently they train their people to be peer support internally. Perhaps they can receive information that all law enforcement needs to know regarding serving the mental health population. Ms. Whitt said law enforcement is clearly a very important stakeholder group and a meeting is scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup> among stakeholders and OAC staff to begin to strategically develop and target the stakeholder relationships that will be needed. The results will be reported at a future meeting.

Commissioner Pating noted that, in regards to the Co-Occurring Disorder Workgroup, there will be a recommendation that will specifically target offender treatment as it relates to all aspects of law enforcement.

**X11. Open Public Comment Period**

- Ms. Ranahan commended the Commission and staff for a well-run meeting. She appreciates the obvious progress being made. Letters from NAMI, REMHCO, PHI and others regarding consideration of the Commission's voting process have been submitted; can discussion of these letters be added to the next meeting's Agenda? Vice Chair Poat said this will be discussed tomorrow. The letters will be acknowledged as well as other information. Ms. Ranahan followed up by acknowledging that a better method may exist, and they want to begin that discussion.
- Ms. Duval gave an update on a previously submitted report regarding their campaign for early identification and prevention. A videoconference was held, with a total of 78 family members and advocates talking about some of the successes and challenges they have in their communities. Participants were able to talk with each other on how to improve interaction in their communities.

**X111. Adjournment**

Chair Gayle adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.